

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-13. **(Canceled)**

14. **(Previously presented)** Method of promoting growth in an animal, comprising the step of:

feeding the animal with an F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain in an amount effective to promote growth in the animal.

15. **(Canceled)**

16. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 14, wherein the step of feeding comprises feeding orally.

17. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 16, wherein the step of feeding comprises feeding the F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain in association with an acceptable carrier, wherein the carrier is selected from the group consisting of a solid feed acceptable carrier or a liquid feed acceptable carrier, or combinations thereof.

18. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 17, wherein the carrier comprises a solid feed acceptable carrier comprising a common solid feedstuff.

19. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 17, wherein the carrier comprises a liquid feed acceptable carrier comprising water.

20. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 17, wherein the carrier comprises a liquid feed acceptable carrier comprising milk.

21. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 14, wherein the effective amount is at least about 5×10^7 CFU of F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain per animal.

22. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 14, wherein the effective amount ranges from about 5×10^7 to about 5×10^9 CFU of F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain per animal.
23. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 14, wherein the F4+ non-pathogenic *Escherichia coli* strain consists of the *Escherichia coli* strain deposited at the International Depository Authority of Canada (IDAC) on January 21, 2005 under accession number IDAC 210105-01, mutants or variants thereof.
24. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 14, wherein the animal is selected from the group consisting of a post-weaning animal, a post-hatching animal, and combinations thereof.
25. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-weaning animal aged from about 10 to about 28 days old.
26. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-hatching animal aged from about 1 to about 7 days old.
27. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-weaning pig.
28. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-weaning mouse.
29. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 24, wherein the animal is a post-hatching poultry animal.

30. **(Previously presented)** The method according to claim 29, wherein the poultry animal is a chicken.

31-37. **(Canceled)**

38. **(New)** A biologically pure *Escherichia coli* strain deposited at the International Depository Authority of Canada (IDAC) on January 21, 2005 under accession number IDAC 210105-01.

39. **(New)** A composition comprising an *Escherichia coli* strain deposited at the International Depository Authority of Canada (IDAC) on January 21, 2005 under accession number IDAC 210105-01 and a feed acceptable carrier.